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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM

August 3, 1995

TO: AF - George E. Moose

THRU: AF - Prudence Bushnell *RB*

FROM: AF/C - Arlene Render *AR*

SUBJECT: Great Lakes Political Conference: Objectives and Methods

CONCEPT

A fundamental component of our African Great Lakes regional strategy -- probably essential to breaking the downward spiral of violence emanating from unresolved conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi which threatens to destabilize the entire region -- is the urgent convening of an international conference to deal with the central issues confronting those countries. Key Western countries, including France, Belgium, Germany and the UK support the conference concept and the Spanish Presidency of the EU has prepared a preliminary draft position paper regarding the scope and goals for such a conference. In addition, following the international conference, all-parties conferences could be organized for Burundi and Rwanda, if necessary.

There is general agreement that the international conference should be convened jointly by the UN and OAU, probably with the respective organizations' Secretaries-General chairing at least the initial sessions. In addition to the immediately affected regional countries (Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire, and probably Kenya), important neighbors need to be invited, at least in observer capacity. In awareness of the anglophone/francophone cleavage, an equitable number of invitations to African observers should be given to a influential Arab and francophone observers as well as anglophones. Most importantly, major donors including, France, Belgium, UK, Japan, Netherlands, and the U.S. among others need to be present as observers and to lend impetus to

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the process. To enhance the African sense of importance of the international conference, it should, if possible, be held in Europe; Addis Ababa, as both OAU headquarters and seat of the current OAU president would also be suitable but might diminish the importance Africans attach to the conference. An alternative site might be South Africa. Given deteriorating security conditions in Burundi and fears of an imminent clash between the ex-FAR and RPA, the conference should be convened as soon as possible on the understanding that it be carefully prepared and that the international community is in agreement on the goals.

ORGANIZATION

The conference should be viewed as two parallel tracks. The first track would be an interlocking set of international understandings and agreements between Great Lakes states dealing with repatriation of refugees, security, and economic development. The second track would focus on internal reconciliation which would require the presence of all key factions and political parties, both civilian and military from Rwanda and Burundi. A crucial issue which would need to be resolved if this track has any hope of success would be agreement that acceptable (non-criminal or genocidally responsible) exile representatives, particularly of the Hutu communities of Burundi and Rwanda, would have to be present. There could be no unilateral vetoes by one group of another. Both the RPA and extremist Tutsi factions in Burundi would have to be convinced to participate with these groups, however great their reluctance. To assist in the internal reconciliation track, considerable reliance could be placed on experienced NGOs such as South Africa's ACCORD or the Vatican's San Egidio order.

Given the probable lack of time on the part of the UN and OAU to prepare the organization of the conference, we should consider soliciting an outside group such as the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA). (Since the GCA is part of the World Bank and both the UN and all African states are members of the GCA, it should be an acceptable entity to provide both conference services and to assist in the political spadework of persuading the various possibly recalcitrant parties to attend and be forthcoming.) The U.S. should be prepared, in concert with the donor community, to help get participants to the table

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and to assist in funding conference preparations. To maximize the chances of success of the international conference, a preliminary meeting should be held to go over conference logistics and more importantly pre-agree on goals, and, if possible, tactics.

The conference agenda could follow the Spanish EU draft paper (attached) whose main agenda items are:

- I. Political and Security
 - A. Political Dialogue/Protection of Minority Rights
 - B. Legal Security (respect for human rights, establishment of rule of law)
 - C. Military Security
- II. Economic Rehabilitation and Development
- III. Refugees and the Human Dimension

The goals of the conference would be as follows (some are more properly defined as tactics encapsulating overall goals):

Track I: POLITICAL RECONCILIATION

- an end to internal violence, external incursions and armed irregular militias;
- progressive installation (in carefully phased stages) of majority democratic rule (as registered in a free, fair, and transparent election process), tightly bound to guarantees for minority rights;
- an end to impunity and the cycles of violence through establishment of a professional, neutral multiethnic judiciary;
- creation of a multiethnic, professional army obedient to democratically elected civilian authority and respectful of human rights;
- repatriation of refugees;
- creation of a follow-up mechanism to assure rigorous enforcement of agreements;

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- carefully structured regional economic development/rehabilitation program with adequate infusion of donor assistance. Emphasis should be given to: maximum employment strategies, especially for male youth; family planning; improved agricultural practices; regional economic integration focusing on comparative advantage.
- careful preparation of educational, cultural and media programs designed to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation while pointing out the moral, physical and national costs of hate, genocide and community strife.

Following the conference, some working groups could meet from time to time to follow-up on agreed actions. A second track could be an all-parties internal conference, particularly for Burundi.

U.S. ROLE

The U.S. would have overlapping, reinforcing roles in both the international and all-parties conferences, if necessary. Its principal roles would be both facilitative and active. Among them are:

- providing behind-the-scenes organizational expertise for the conferences;
- funding significant aspects of the conferences including transportation, accommodation and security;
- acting effectively, where necessary, to break deadlocks and generally to serve as honest broker. To be most effective, such a role would have to be performed "off camera";
- galvanizing donor community to fund directly and in-kind services of activities deemed essential to break the cycle of violence i.e. alternative employment generation, professionalizing military to serve democratically elected civilian government, establishing media and cultural programs designed to counter ethnic hatred propaganda.

To engender the necessary atmosphere conducive to obtaining assent to participate from reluctant parties, the U.S. should consider the following steps:

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- having the President personally and publicly appeal to all regional governments to participate; private warnings of aid -- both development and humanitarian -- freeze/reduction/cutoffs could be made to recalcitrant parties;
- getting key Western donors heads of government and NGOs to make similar appeals;

France has strongly supported the concept of an international regional political conference. Nevertheless, France had been a staunch supporter of the Habyarimana government in Rwanda and has complex relations with Burundi.

The Great Lakes is, in fact, a highly permeable region capable of supporting indigenous cultures as well as European colonial residues. France, as a key player and potential spoiler, must be persuaded that playing a positive role is not only essential to the success of the project but is not inimical to its interests. The presence at the conference of an adequate number of heavyweight African francophones including probably Mobutu (unfortunately), should help reconcile the French.

Attachments:

As stated

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